

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 05130 080944Z
ACTION AGR-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 STR-07 TRSE-00
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 ICA-20 /061 W
-----128453 081821Z /46

R 080930Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7922
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION USBERLIN

UNCLAS BERLIN 05130

PASS AGRICULTURE ELECTRONICALLY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, GE
SUBJ: GDR GRAIN HARVEST BEGINS UNDER FAVORABLE WEATHER
CONDITIONS

1. SUMMARY: IMPROVED WEATHER CONDITIONS SINCE EARLY JULY APPEAR TO HAVE FAVORED THE START OF THE GDR'S GRAIN HARVEST. WHILE THE PACE OF THE HARVEST IS SLIGHTLY AHEAD OF LAST YEAR, SCATTERED INFORMATION INDICATES THAT GRAIN YIELDS ARE BELOW THE EXTREMELY HIGH LEVELS TARGETED. MINDFUL OF THE EFFECTS OF ADVERSE WEATHER ON THE 1977 HARVEST, GDR AUTHORITIES HAVE PUSHED PREPARATIONS TO HARVEST, DRY AND STORE GRAIN UNDER INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS. GDR HARVEST EFFORTS ARE BEING AIDED BY A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF E-512 COMBINES AVAILABLE TO HARVEST GRAIN. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER UNSEASONABLY COOL AND RAINY WEATHER IN JUNE AND EARLY JULY SLOWED THE RIPENING OF WINTER GRAINS, A GENERAL IMPROVEMENT IN WEATHER SINCE EARLY JULY HAS CREATED GENERALLY FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR THE START OF 1978 GRAIN HARVEST. THE PACE OF THE 1978 GRAIN HARVEST
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IS ALREADY SLIGHTLY AHEAD OF 1977. OFFICIAL GDR REPORTS INDICATE THAT WINTER BARLEY WAS COMPLETELY HARVESTED BY THE END OF JULY AND THAT A THIRD OF THE ROUGHLY 2.5 MILLION HECTARES OF GDR CROPLAND PLANTED IN GRAIN HAD BEEN HARVESTED AS OF AUGUST 5--ROUGHLY 4 DAYS AHEAD OF THE PACE SET IN 1977.

3. IN KEEPING WITH ESTABLISHED PRACTICE, GDR PRESS HAS

NOT COMMENTED ON QUALITY OR YIELDS OF THIS YEAR'S HARVEST. OFFICIAL REPORTING ON THIS YEAR'S HARVEST HAS TENDED TO EMPHASIZE MEASURES TO IMPROVE QUALITY AND YIELD OF THE HARVEST AND HAS LACKED THE TONE OF ALARM OF 1977 REPORTING WHICH STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF GETTING GRAIN HARVESTED AND UNDER SHELTER AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. WE INTERPRET THIS OVERALL Milder REPORTING ON THE HARVEST AS AN INDICATION OF GENERALLY FAVORABLE HARVEST PROGRESS TO DATE. DESPITE THE APPEARANCE OF SATISFACTORY HARVEST PROGRESS, SCATTERED INFORMATION ON HARVEST FROM BEZIRKS LEIPZIG AND NEU BRANDENBURG INDICATES THAT HARVEST YIELDS MAY BE UP TO 10 DECITONS PER HECTARE BELOW PLAN GOALS. (THE GDR'S GOALS OF 45.2 DECITONS OF GRAIN PER HECTARE, OR 11.8 MILLION TONS FOR THE TOTAL HARVEST, IS 36 PERCENT HIGHER THAN LAST YEAR'S HARVEST OF 8.65 MILLION TONS AND 22 PERCENT HIGHER THAN THE GDR'S RECORD HARVEST OF 9.7 MILLION TONS IN 1976. IT IS THEREFORE POSSIBLE FOR THE GDR'S 1978 HARVEST TO BE VERY GOOD IN COMPARISON TO PREVIOUS HARVESTS AND STILL FALL SHORT OF HARVEST GOALS BY A CONSIDERABLE MARGIN.)

4. APPARENTLY MINDFUL OF THE LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE 1977 HARVEST, GDR AGRICULTURAL OFFICIALS HAVE PUSHED PREPARATIONS TO REAP HARVEST UNDER INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS. PRESS REPORTS SUGGEST THAT GRAIN DRYING AND STORAGE FACILITIES HAVE BEEN EXPANDED OVER THE PAST UNCLASSIFIED

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YEAR. COLLECTIVE FARMS HAVE PREPARED FOR WEATHER-RELATED CONTINGENCIES BY CONCLUDING ADVANCE CONTRACTS WITH SUGAR PLANTS FOR USE OF FACILITIES TO DRY GRAIN. EXPANSION OF STORAGE FACILITIES FOR GRAIN HAS INCLUDED CONSTRUCTION OF CONCRETE PAVED AREAS NEXT TO SUGAR FACTORIES SO THAT GRAIN CAN BE STORED UNDER PLASTIC SHEETING UNTIL IT CAN BE DRIED IN THE FACTORY.

5. IN ADDITION TO LAYING CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR ADVERSE WEATHER, GDR AUTHORITIES HAVE TAKEN CONSIDERABLE PAINS TO ASSURE THAT THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF COMBINES ARE AVAILABLE AND IN WORKING ORDER TO BRING THE GRAIN HARVEST IN. OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE GDR HAS ADDED 2,500 OF THE NEW E-512 COMBINES TO ITS FLEET OF HARVESTING EQUIPMENT, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF COMBINES TO 13,200. THE GDR PRESS HAS REPORTED THAT "UNUSUALLY STRENUOUS" MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO ASSURE THAT SPARE PARTS--A PERENNIAL PROBLEM IN THE GDR ECONOMY--ARE AVAILABLE TO KEEP THE MACHINES IN THE FIELDS RUNNING. VERY LIKELY DUE TO THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF COMBINES, THE GDR PRESS HAS THUS FAR FAILED TO REPORT ANY LARGE-SCALE SHIFTING OF COMBINES BETWEEN REGIONS TO MAKE UP FOR LOCAL

SHORTAGES IN EQUIPMENT AS WAS THE CASE DURING THE 1977
HARVEST. HARVEST LABOR FORCES HAVE BEEN AUGMENTED BY
ADDING WORKERS FROM COOPERATIVES SPECIALIZING IN ANIMAL
PRODUCTION AND BY INTRODUCING FDJ (FREE GERMAN YOUTH)
BRIGADES TO HELP IN THE HARVEST. BOLEN

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, GRAINS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BERLIN05130
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780324-0652
Format: TEL
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780884/aaaacssh.tel
Line Count: 121
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f2f66d66-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AGR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1797935
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GDR GRAIN HARVEST BEGINS UNDER FAVORABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS
TAGS: EAGR, GC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f2f66d66-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014